COLLECTORS' CORNER #71 FEBRUARY 20, 1976
ROGER COWELL

BICENTENNIAL AWAKES COLLECTORS

ANNCR: AND NOW, COLLECTORS' CORNER... THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES OF PROGRAMS FOR LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS -- WHETHER THEY BE STAMPS OR COINS, SNUFF BOTTLES OR OLD AUTOS, OR MERELY BALLS OF STRING. HERE IS ---------- WITH THE STORY OF HOW AMERICA'S BICENTENNIAL HAS STIRRED THE INTEREST OF COLLECTORS OF EARLY AMERICANA.

NARR: THE BICENTENNIAL, OF COURSE, CELEBRATES THE NATION'S BIRTHDAY IN 1776, TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO. BUT STRANGELY, THE PRESENT FEVER-PITCH OF INTEREST IN EARLY AMERICANA GOES BACK ONLY TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY...NOT THE EIGHTEENTH. EXPERTS IN AMERICANA ARTS AND ANTIQUES HAVE A READY EXPLANATION. THEY SAYS THAT'S BECAUSE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ITEMS ARE UNIFORMLY RARE AND EXPENSIVE, AND ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE SHOW-ROOMS OF BIG CITY DEALERS. THE CHEAPER AND MUCH MORE AVAILABLE NINETEENTH CENTURY ITEMS CAN BE FOUND IN THOUSANDS OF ANTIQUE SHOPS AND AUCTIONS SCATTERED ABOUT THE LAND.

OPT

FOR EVERY COLLECTOR WHO BUYS AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DUNCAN PHYFE SIDEBOARD FROM A NEW YORK ART DEALER, ONE HUNDRED WILL PICK UP A COUNTRY DRESSER OR BENNINGTON-WARE PITCHER AT A COUNTRY AUCTION.

NARR: HERE'S A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE HOTTEST ITEMS THESE DAYS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICANA. PAINTINGS ARE AVAILABLE AT MODERATE PRICE RANGES BUT PRICES ARE GOING UP. BIG-NAME WESTERN ARTISTS LIKE FREDERIC REMINGTON AND CHARLES RUSSELL ARE THE HARDEST TO FIND AND THE MOST EXPENSIVE WITH THEIR OILS OF COWBOYS AND THE OLD WEST SELLING FOR UPWARDS OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. OTHER WORKS BY ARTISTS OF THE SO-CALLED HUDSON RIVER AND NAIVE MARINE SCHOOLS SELL WELL AND MUCH CHEAPER. APPARENTLY THE TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVE CHARACTER OF THESE ARTISTS FITS TODAY'S MOOD.

OPT

IN FURNITURE, THE WORD FROM THE EXPERTS IS TO BEWARE THE BOTH THE FAKE AND THE ORNATE. FAKES AS WELL AS MODERN COPIES OF SIMPLE COUNTRY FURNITURE FLOOD THE MARKET. THE HALLMARK OF GOOD COUNTRY FURNITURE WORTH THE COLLECTORS' TIME AND MONEY IS A STURDY, WELL-MADE PIECE WITH BEAUTY AND GRACE, BUT WITHOUT CARVING, INLAY, VENEER OR OTHER FRILLS.

WHEN YOU GET STARTED ON NINETEENTH CENTURY CERAMICS, YOU CAN BUY ANYTHING FROM AN ODD CUP FOR JUST A FEW DOLLARS, TO FIFTY DOLLARS FOR A PAIR OF BENNINGTON-WARE DOORKNOBS MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD, TO OVER THREE-THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR A SINGLE PITCHER MADE BY THE POTTER WILLIAM ELLIS TUCKER. FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO ABOUT 1830, REDWARE AND SALT-

NARR: (CONT'D) GLAZED STONEWARE ARE THE THINGS MOST PRIZED BY COLLECTORS. FROM ABOUT 1830 TO 1860 AMERICAN-MADE PORCELAIN CAME INTO VOGUE. FROM 1876 UNTIL AFTER THE TURN OF THE CENTURY THE THINGS MOST PRIZED ARE ART POTTERY AND ART PORCELAIN. THE POTTERY VASES OFTEN SHOW CHINESE OR JAPANESE INFLUENCE. THE PORCELAIN HAS A DISTINCTIVE ORIENTAL TOUCH.

THAT JUST SKIMS THE SURFACE OF THE AMERICANA WHICH IS BEING NEWLY DISCOVERED THESE DAYS, THANKS TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE NATION'S BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN COLLECTORS' CORNER... NOTES ON THE WORLD OF COLLECTORS WHO BUY AND SELL AND, ABOVE ALL, TREASURE THINGS FROM STAMPS TO STRING TO MEMENTOES FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF AMERICAN HISTORY. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE COLLECTORS' CORNER. THIS IS ----------.

###

RC/CAK